

From Policy to Practice: Strengthening Female Teacher Recruitment, Deployment and Retention in Rural Jigawa State

ADVOCACY BRIEF



This advocacy brief draws on research conducted in May 2025 by the Jigawa State Ministry of Basic Education, the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), and the Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE), with support from the UK-funded Partnership for Learning for All in Nigeria (PLANE) programme. Using desk reviews, gender-disaggregated data, and interviews with 63 stakeholders (38 women and 25 men), including female teachers, government officials, and community leaders across Dutse and Taura Local Government Areas, the study examined the systemic barriers and enablers influencing female teacher recruitment, deployment, and retention in Jigawa State.

Background

Female teachers are central to equitable learning. Their presence improves girls' enrolment, retention and safety while promoting more inclusive classrooms and improving overall education outcomes. Yet Jigawa State faces a serious shortage, and uneven distribution of female teachers. This is particularly relevant in rural areas. This limits girls' access to quality education and compounds wider teacher workforce pressures.

Box 1: Why Female Teacher Recruitment Matters

Increasing the number of female teachers is essential for gender equity and to achieving better educational outcomes overall. In Jigawa, increasing the number of female teachers would:

- Strengthen girls' enrolment and retention
- Improve girls' aspirations
- Support safer, more inclusive learning environments for all learners.

What the Evidence Shows in Jigawa

Box 2: Key system snapshot, Jigawa (2022)¹



Female teachers make up only **13%** of the teaching workforce (**8.8% at junior secondary**).



Primary pupil-qualified teacher ratio is **138:1** (**target: 40:1**).



Over **10,000** auxiliary teachers support the system, and retirements (2022–2027) are projected at **3,008** teachers.

Since adopting the Teacher Recruitment, Deployment and Replacement Policy in 2021, (Implementation Plan developed in 2024), Jigawa State has taken steps to improve teacher management and distribution. However, gaps in qualifications, deployment practices, and retention persist. The research found that:

- 01. Policy foundations exist, but implementation gaps persist.** The 2021 Teacher Recruitment, Deployment and Replacement Policy recognises gender equity, yet awareness, oversight and political interference undermine delivery.
- 02. Female teachers face systemic disadvantages.** Women are often academically qualified, but underrepresented - especially in rural schools and junior secondary subjects.

- 03. Insecurity and poor infrastructure deter rural postings.** Lack of safe housing, transport, fencing, lighting and female toilets reduces female teachers willingness and ability to remain in posts.
- 04. Cultural and family constraints restrict mobility.** Domestic responsibilities and marriage-related pressures and restrictive norms limit women's availability for deployment away from home.
- 05. Support systems are limited and not gender-responsive.** There are few structured incentives for rural service; positive support is rarely provided alongside enforcement.

What Female Teachers and Other Education Stakeholders in Jigawa Say

Primary research engaged 63 participants through 15 key informant interviews and 6 focus groups in Dutse and Taura LGAs. Stakeholders reported that:

Deployment decisions can be overridden by patronage and 'who you know'.

Salary increases help, but do not address safety, dignity, transport or family realities.

Minimum conditions for rural deployment include secure accommodation, reliable transport, female toilets, and respectful working spaces.

Women often create informal coping mechanisms (arranging transport, relying on nearby women's homes) that are unsafe and unsustainable.

1. Summarised from: PLANE (2022), Baseline assessment of teacher provision and policies: Jigawa, PLANE, DAI, UKAID and PLANE (2022), Baseline assessment of teacher provision and policies: Kano, PLANE, DAI, UKAID

The Core Problem



- **Policy ≠ Practice**
Strong policy framework, but weak implementation

- **Qualified but Missing**
Women remain underrepresented, despite having the required qualifications

- **Unsafe + Unsupported**
Safety risks and inadequate infrastructure create barriers

- **System not designed with Women in Mind.**
Limited gender-responsive incentives and support, including training access

The Minimum Package for Rural Postings



What women teachers need at a minimum to make rural teaching feasible, safe and dignified:



Safe accommodation + sanitation

Gender-segregated accommodation and toilets in/near schools.



Affordable transport solutions

Reliable, safe options that reduce out-of-pocket costs



Gender-responsive safety planning + reporting

Clear prevention measures and trusted reporting/response pathways



Flexible arrangements

Support for nursing mothers and women with young children



Respectful working spaces + basic resources

Private staff area, prayer space (where relevant) and essential teaching materials

Priority Recommendations to Address the Core Problems

To address the issues and barriers discussed above, this brief proposes specific, actionable recommendations for government, communities, and development partners.

Priorities include:



Strengthening implementation of the policy and roadmap



Introducing gender-sensitive incentives for rural postings



Improving safety and working conditions



Building local teacher pipelines



Expanding collaboration across ministries, CSOs and training institutions

By prioritising these actions, Jigawa State can close the gender gap in its teaching workforce, ensure safer and more inclusive.



Specific recommendations for Government

- 01.** Strengthen implementation of the Teacher Policy and Roadmap by investing in policy dissemination, ensuring timely budgetary allocations and instituting robust monitoring systems at all levels
- 02.** Incentivise rural postings with tailored, gender-sensitive packages. There is a need to introduce transportation allowances, rural posting allowances, and flexible work schedules for female teachers in hard-to-reach areas.
- 03.** Strengthen collaboration between education MDAs and Pre-Service and In-Service Training institutions and systems to deepen guidance on tailored courses to meet the needs of the state around teacher shortage, provide targeted scholarship opportunities for girls/women from rural areas, and embed digital literacy, classroom management, and gender-responsive pedagogy.
- 04.** Provide gender-responsive safety measures by reinforcing zero tolerance on violence, strengthening preventive and reporting mechanisms, and addressing concerns as soon as they arise.
- 05.** Work with communities and CSOs as active stakeholders (e.g. Jigawa Education Accountability Forum, School-Based Management Committees, Female Teachers Association, Community-Based Management Committees, Mothers Association, Religious and Traditional Leaders and other relevant government offices and positions) to identify, recommend, and support young women as potential teachers, and effectively advocate for improvements in the number of female teachers and the conditions of service. For example, female NCE graduates from rural areas should be prioritised and supported, including through scholarships and localised pipelines to teaching jobs.

Specific Recommendations for Communities: School-based Management Committees (SBMCs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

- 01.** JEAF and other advocacy groups to disseminate research findings, conduct advocacy to policymakers and implementers, and organise town hall meetings on different platforms using evidence-based advocacy materials to promote buy-in.
- 02.** Work with LGEA on specific interventions that ameliorate conditions for female teachers. For example, work with local transport associations to establish localised transport solutions to ease movement and security concerns.
- 03.** Engage in community sensitisation campaigns to address harmful cultural norms that limit women from taking up teaching roles.
- 04.** Improve working conditions and school learning environments for female teachers and learners.
- 05.** Work with LGEA to identify and support girls and young women from the community interested in entering the teaching profession.

Specific Recommendations for Development Partners and Private-Public Partnership

- 01.** Support research on the impact of female teacher representation on girls' enrolment, learning outcomes, and gender-responsive safety protocols in schools.

Why Action Matters Now

Improving the recruitment, deployment, and retention of female teachers in Jigawa State is not merely a policy priority; it is a foundational requirement for achieving inclusive, quality education and better learning outcomes. This research shows that although strong policy frameworks and promising reforms exist in Jigawa State, implementation gaps, socio-cultural barriers, and a lack of targeted support continue to prevent many women from joining or staying in the teaching workforce, especially in rural areas.

The recommendations presented in this brief are grounded in both evidence and experience. With coordinated and sustained implementation, clear targets and shared ownership, Jigawa State can close the teacher gender gap and unlock the full potential of its female teachers – transforming schools and reflecting strong role models for both girls and boys in the classroom.

